

Message Text

SECRET

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DRAFTED BY EUR/WE - W.P. KELLY
APPROVED BY EUR - MR. HARTMAN
S/S: R. PERITO
S -R. AHERNE
C:RHOPPER

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 230342 TOSEC 270259

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS:PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: PORTUGUESE INVITATION
FOR THE SECRETARY FROM HARTMAN THRU SONNENFELDT

PROBLEM

SHOULD YOU ACCEPT THE PORTUGUESE INVITATION (REFTEL)
TO VISIT LISBON BY STOPPING OVER ON YOUR WAY HOME?

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

I HAVE REPEATED TO YOU LISBON 6286 WHICH CONVEYS THE
INVITATION OF THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT FOR YOU TO MAKE AN
EARLY VISIT TO LISBON. I REALIZE THAT YOUR SCHEDULE THIS
TRIP IS EXTREMELY TIGHT BUT IF AN OPENING SHOULD DEVELOP,
A LISBON STOPOVER ON THE WAY BACK (HOWEVER BRIEF) WOULD BE
A GOOD IDEA.

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THE PRINCIPAL THEME OF SUCH A VISIT SHOULD BE RE-

ASSURANCE TO SOARES OF OUR CONTINUING ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN PORTUGAL. HE FACES SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES THIS FALL, PARTICULARLY FROM THE COMMUNISTS AND THE ULTRA-LEFT WHO CORRECTLY SEE HIS ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM AS A DIRECT

THREAT. WITHIN THE MILITARY, WE HAVE ALSO BEGUN TO HEAR RUMBLINGS OF DEEP PESSIMISM ABOUT THE ABILITY OF AN ELECTED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMY. THIS IS A NEW AND NOT YET SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT, BUT THESE SENTIMENTS COME FROM SOME IMPORTANT ARMED FORCES FIGURES WHO HAVE BEEN STAUNCH SUPPORTERS OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY.

SOARES WOULD SEE YOUR VISIT AS THE MOST IMPORTANT GESTURE OF WESTERN SUPPORT SINCE HIS GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE IN JULY. HE WILL, OF COURSE, ALSO BE INTERESTED IN GAINING YOUR BACKING FOR HIS REQUEST TO US FOR A \$300 MILLION BALANCE OF PAYMENTS LOAN. THE TREASURY EXPERTS NO IN LISBON WILL HAVE TO PREPARE A REPORT OF THEIR FINDINGS NEXT WEEK AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF LOAN APPROVAL WILL PROBABLY NOT BE POSSIBLE WHILE YOU ARE IN LISBON. BUT YOU COULD EXPRESS SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING FOR SOARES' POSITION, CONGRATULATE HIM FOR HIS COURAGEOUS SPEECH ON ECONOMIC POLICY AND PROMISE TO SPEAK TO SIMON DIRECTLY WHEN YOU RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT YOU VISIT LISBON ON YOUR WAY BACK TO WASHINGTON IF AN OPENING OCCURS IN YOUR SCHEDULE TO ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR REAL TALKS.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

DRAFTED BY: EUR/WE:WPKELLY; APPROVED BY: EUR:HARTMAN

CLEARANCE: S

S: R. AHERNE

C:RHOPPER

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